TITO, (SFR Yugoslavia) BREAKS (diplomatic) RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL
MUNICH, 14 June 1967 (Communist Area Analysis Departments Yugoslavia - Slobodan Stankovic).


In his efforts to fulfill the obligation he apparently took upon himself at the June 9 Moscow conference of the East European Communist chiefs, President Tito broke Yugoslavia's diplomatic relations with Israel. This is the first time in Communist Yugoslavia's postwar history that this country has broken diplomatic relations with any other country. One should emphasize that Tito's commitment is considered in Belgrade as his own personal action by which he faced his comrades in the Party and Government with a fait accompli. This is clearly seen from at least three points:

Firstly, Tito explained, post factum, at a joint session of the Party Presidium and Executive Committee (Politburo), held in Belgrade on June 11, that the June 9 Moscow Declaration should be approved by the top Yugoslav Party bodies because "it is in line with Comrade Tito's statement made on the first day [June 5] of Israel's aggression against the Arab countries."[1] His June 5 statement was published as "a statement by the President of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, Josip Bros Tito," although. Tito spoke in the name of the Yugoslav Government and people. However, according to Article 217 of Yugoslavia's Constitution., in which eight rights of the State President are described, no right is granted for such an action as taken by Tito on June 5. Such an action could have been justified before April 1963 under the previous Constitution according to which Tito was both the State President and Prime Minister.

Secondly, both Koca Popovic, the former Yugoslav Foreign Minister and former State Vice-President, who was sent to Cairo on June 11, and Marko Nikezie, the present Foreign Minister, who was sent on June 13 to New Delhi -- were officially sent as Tito's personal emissaries. "There will be more of such types of visits to come," a radio commentator said.[2] The same commentator said that plans are being prepared "for broader international action in this direction."
Thirdly, the New York Times correspondent in Belgrade, Richard Eder, reported that "it is also evident, in conversation with officials, journalists and diplomats here, that President Tito's bitter attack on Israel and his partisanship with the Arabs has caused misgivings even among some members of his government." Said Eder:

There is concern that Yugoslavia, which looks mostly West for her economic development and for some of her cultural and political aims, would jeopardize this relationship by joining too stridently in the clamor against Israel and, beyond that, against the United States and Britain.[3]

Anti-American Propaganda

What is especially disturbing is the ever more vocal anti-American attitude taken by the Yugoslav press and radio. In addition, for the first time, a Belgrade paper took a strong position against the American Jews. The New York correspondent of the paper, Miroslav Radojcic, said:

Because of six million American Jews who, due to their educational standard and the positions they occupy, possess far greater power than is normal for a minority in the sea of 200 million inhabitants of the New World, the Israeli cause has been here irresistibly represented. The impression has been created that this Israeli course is a moral obligation of the United States, to give powerful protection to the Jewish state in the sea of the Arabic world.[4]

Such an anti-Jewish attitude has never been present among the Yugoslav peoples and never before in the Communist Party. The persecution of the Jews in Yugoslavia during the last war was inspired and organized by the Nazi occupants and a few of their domestic stooges. The Communist Partisans, during the war won much, sympathy because of their firm position against any anti-Jewish persecution. In order to justify the breaking of diplomatic relations with as small a country as Israel, surrounded by so many millions of Arabs, and in order to create the impression that two and a half million Jews threaten the existence of the Arabs, the Yugoslav radio and press have indulged in anti-American
propaganda. Sundic claimed that the breaking of relations with Israel has been taken "in order to prevent the escalation of the imperialist forces in other areas, among others also in the Balkans." This is why Yugoslavia "has decided to give universal aid to the struggle of the Arab nations against imperialism." In addition, "Yugoslavia is taking some independent measures to give support and [material] aid to Arab countries," Sundic said.[5] A leading Croat functionary, Dr. Mladen Ivekovic, the former Yugoslav Ambassador in Bonn, said at a conference of the Croat Socialist Alliance that "interests of the so-called free world are always being identified with the interests of American imperialism." In Ivekovic's opinion the crisis in the Middle East is only a part of "recent events in Greece" and "of some phenomena happening in neighbouring Italy."[6] Consequently, the Middle East war has been "a component part of a general plan aimed at bringing about the worsening of the situation" in the world. For this reason, Ivekovic said, "our country has great interest in common actions by all peaceful forces and countries against every tension and armed conflict."[7] The Yugoslav press stubbornly repeats Nasser's allegations that the chief reason for Arab defeat was the fact that "American and British airplanes were covering Israeli skies and helped the Israeli Army on land to inflict heavy blows against the Arabs where they were the weakest and most sensitive."[8] On the other  

6) Yugoslav-Italian relations have of late worsened.
7) Radio Zagreb, 13 June 1967, 18:00 hrs.
8) Politika, 13 June 1967 (the paper's correspondent in Amman) (PTO)

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hand, some Yugoslav journalists do not hide their admiration for the efficiency of the Jews, One of them said that the war in the Middle East "as an offensive was the most swift and most surprising Blitzkrieg ever carried out,"[9] Yugoslav journalists do not hide the fact that "Nasser has obviously failed militarily" and that his "military-strategic appraisals were wrong." [10] They also claim that the Russian nationals no longer feel at ease in Egypt, Their chief idea, however, is that everything possible should be done to prevent Israel from making any profit from the war it won. Said Sundic:
Yugoslavia would resist any attempt aimed at forcing the Arab states to negotiate with Israel before the troops of the aggressors are withdrawn from their, the Arab, territories.[11]
There is another interesting aspect in the Yugoslav reporting of the Israeli-Arab war. The Tel Aviv correspondent of the largest Yugoslav weekly, Vjesnik u srijedu, obviously reflected the feelings of a majority of the Yugoslav population, when he said also the following:
Certainly the report is very interesting that the Egyptian fort at the entrance of the Tiran Straits, Sharm el Sheikh, was captured by a brigade of parachutists whose commander was a Jew from Yugoslavia; he allegedly was our Partisan colonel. Another story says that the Egyptian commander of Gaza signed the document of capitulation before an Israeli general born in Zagreb. The third story says that the commander of Israeli armoured forces is a Jew from the Banat [in Yugoslavia].
On the other hand, some functionaries in Yugoslavia seem to be too hasty in following Tito's anti-Jewish line. A West German tourist in Yugoslavia was just sentenced to 30 days imprisonment because he publicly "supported Israeli aggression against the Arabs." The unfortunate man whose name is Franz Haberstoff, obviously made the mistake of believing that it was forbidden

9) Politika, 13 June 1967 (the paper's Belgrade correspondent.)
10) Vjesnik u srijedu, Zagreb, 14 June 1967.

Soviet policy before, during and after the Six Day War has been studied extensively. Its most visible aspect – breaking off diplomatic relations with Israel – cast a deep shadow for decades over Israel's relations with the Soviet bloc, to be overcome only during Gorbachev's perestroika.
Now a surprising source has become available from the archives of the Hungarian Communist Party, recently discovered by Prof. Andras Kovacs, director of the Jewish Studies Program at the Central European University in Budapest and published by him in Vol. III of the program's Yearbook.
The source is a verbatim account of a report made on June 13, 1967, by Janos Kadar, secretary-general of the Hungarian Communist Party, to his party's Politburo. In informal language, aimed only at the top echelons of the party, Kadar reports about a hastily arranged secret summit meeting of the leaders of all communist parties held in Moscow on June 9 in response to the war.
What transpires from Kadar's report is the utter disarray Israel's victory created in the Soviet bloc. Again and again Kadar refers to the enormity of the Arab defeat and the humiliation it caused the Soviet bloc. He tells his
colleagues that "many things may not be said *****dly: for instance, we cannot say that 90 percent of the Arab army is illiterate," hence could not use adequately sophisticated Soviet armaments. He contrasts this with Israel, which has "more highly qualified and skilled human resources," then adds – obviously echoing typical stereotypical thinking about intellectual Jews, that "people which primary education were set against university graduates."

Yet the most interesting part of the speech, however, concerns Yugoslavia. The emergency meeting in Moscow was the first communist summit attended by Tito since he broke with Stalin's Soviet Union in 1949, and Kadar mentions the significance of his attendance.

THE DOCUMENT shows two aspects connected with Tito which are novel. Tito – having close ties with Nasser through their joint leadership, together with India's Nehru and Indonesia's Sukarno in the Nonaligned Bloc – turns out to have been much more supportive of Nasser than the Soviets.

First of all, Kadar recounts several times that Nasser did not consult with the Soviets about his moves of closing the Gulf of Aqaba and the withdrawal of UN troops from Sinai: this is important – though not totally conclusive – evidence about the lack of Soviet involvement in Egypt's decisions. On the other hand, Kadar reports that "Comrade Tito said that they had consulted with them and that they had supported these measures."

Kadar adds that this is understandable, since the Yugoslavs "have an old and close relationship with Egypt, that is older and more permanent than the Soviet relationship."

He further says that Tito had also agreed immediately to the establishment of an emergency arms airlift to Egypt. This put Tito's attitude to the Middle East – and his responsibility for the outbreak of the Six Day War – in a completely new light. For all of his traditional support for Nasser, Tito has been considered in the West as a responsible, independent leader: it now transpires that he was much more pro-Arab than the Soviets, and bears responsibility for Nasser's disastrous slide into the war. One can imagine what would have happened if Tito had tried to dissuade Nasser from closing the Straits of Tiran.

Tito's radical attitude re-appears several times in Kadar's report (and it should be viewed as credible, given Kadar's general praise for Tito). Again, it was Tito who introduced the draft communiqué which branded Israel as an aggressor. Many other delegates very unhappy with some aspects of the language proposed, and Kadar reports how there was some discussion about what should go into the communiqué, some suggesting "US and British imperialism" should also be condemned.

It was the Romanians who opposed branding Israel as an aggressor, and it was Tito who said that unless this was included "he will not be able to go home, for we have told the whole of Yugoslavia who is the aggressor."

Kadar, for his part, adds that "although we will not probably write it in the newspapers, it must be stated clearly in party debates that the socialist countries have never supported the Arab propaganda formulations that Israel must be destroyed."

The text of Kadar's speech is unique in its frankness as it provides a glimpse into the internal working of the Soviet Bloc system under crisis: far from showing a uniform approach, one sees disagreements and nuances. Also, the Romanian position – Kadar reports in detail how the Romanian delegation openly disagreed with Brezhnev – already foreshadows the independent Romanian line towards Israel: when all communist countries – again following the lead of Yugoslavia – broke diplomatic relations with Israel, Ceausescu's Romania maintained its independent position and refused to follow the Soviet line.

But what is most revealing in this document is the radical anti-Israeli line of Tito, which must come as a surprise to many Israelis who always had a deep admiration for the hero of the anti-Nazi Yugoslav partisans: because of his World War II record, many Israelis were ready to take in their stride Tito's neutralist alliance with Nasser. But that it was Tito – rather than the Soviets – who was consulted by Nasser about the steps that led to the 1967 war, and that he supported Nasser's aggression (which also delegitimized the role of the UN) – is an unwelcome and sobering revelation.

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